



MINUTES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 10, 2020

9:30 a.m.

Charlotte County Beach Complex

4500 Harbor Blvd.

Port Charlotte, FL 33948

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Upon the roll being called it was determined a quorum was present.

3. Chairman's Comments

A. REMINDER TO ALL VISITORS ADDRESSING THE COMMITTEE: PLEASE SIGN IN. It is helpful when preparing the Minutes. A clipboard and a pen are provided on the podium for your convenience.

B. REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS STATE THEIR NAME AND ORGANIZATION and TO USE THE MICROPHONE WHEN ADDRESSING THE COMMITTEE. It is helpful when preparing the Minutes

C. REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS, STAFF AND VISITORS TO PLEASE SILENCE THEIR CELL PHONES.

4. Changes to the Agenda

None offered.

5. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

None offered.

6. Regular Business

A. Approval of the Minutes of the Pre-Agenda Meeting from November 5,, 2020
Additions, Corrections or Deletions, none offered; Approved as submitted, by acclamation.

B. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting from November 12, 2020.
Additions, Corrections or Deletions, none offered; Approved as submitted, by acclamation.

C. FY22 Grant information – Jim Darden

Jim Darden said the handouts this month are boater revolving fund fiscal report, there is a boater improvement fund 2021 grant projects list, and boater revolving fund revenue statistics.

Susan Bareither said this shows we have 25% less amount to work with.

Mr. Darden said on the back of that sheet, it shows you the revenue we earned in 2020. Highlighted area is the 3 sources of funding. The State, which comes from the registration fees, the County can do an optional registration fee for boat registration, which is the Local and the WCIND funds. Last year we were 25% less than the year before. Looking into that we found out the State added some fees to the registration and took it out of the Local portion. He said since we do not spend \$50,000 a year on derelict vessel removal, it is pretty much coming out of hide. The State froze the derelict vessel program after Covid started because they were concerned about budgetary restraints.

Tom Ireland asked about the statistics showing the 25% drop, that shows 25% down in the BIF State fund, but on the Local it shows an increase.

Mr. Darden said he would think registrations were up by 2%. If they had not taken our 25%, then it would have been up 2% as well. Actually we can consider that as minus 27% because of the 2% increase in registration got ate up by the government fees.

Hank Killion asked how much of this was awarded after our meeting? I know the sheriff got funding after our meeting. Were there any other projects that got money after what we went through with our grant meeting?

Mr. Darden said the motor fest gave grant money and that did not occur. The police got a grant in 2019 for the 2020 year. They got an out of cycle grant awarded from the Commissioners but I thought you guys approved that.

Mr. Killion said he did not remember Public Works getting a boat as well.

Mr. Darden said that was a carry over from 2020 and yes, they did get approved.

John Welsh asked does this reduction, I think last time we heard that the big government was going to take the \$100,000 out of our funds. Is that what is partly reflected here?

Mr. Darden said he is not familiar with that.

Mr. Welsh said he thought last time there was a discussion about money being taken out of this by the State?

Mr. Ireland said maybe it was the 25% but it was not \$100,000.

Mr. Darden said then finally below that is the fiscal year 2022 grant aware budget. I am looking at about \$750,000 of local money and including the balances we have now, anticipated revenue for 2021 and 2022.

Capt. Ron Blago asked with the upcoming grant cycle, what is the last day people can apply for the grant?

Mr. Darden said January 31, 2021. He said the grant applications are on-line now. If you go to the MAC committee website on the County website, there is a link under there for the boater improvement fund, click on that and the applications are on that page.

D. MSBU Update – Matt Logan

Mr. Ireland said Mr. Logan is out but Zack Patchell is here.

Mr. Patchell said he is the new dredging project manager.

Alligator Creek – there is no active projects. This was included in the pre-storm bathymetric survey. We received some draft copies back on that, approximately 3,800 cubic yards. I don't have a direction to move forward with the project at this time.

Buena Vista as well – I have 7,200 – 40 cubic yards that showed up in the bathymetric for those exterior channels. No active project at this time.

Edgewater North – we are initiating bathymetric survey project. That will be coming up very soon.

Gulf Cove – that is currently being designed. This is a design only. No direction to move forward with construction.

Harbour Heights – that is included in the pre-storm. I have not seen anything on this yet but I expect that very soon.

Hayward canals – we are still waiting on Army Corp. I did see some correspondence so I do expect that permitting to be resolved shortly.

Manchester waterway – pleased to announce this is completed. We are working on finalizing the paperwork for that project. This was successfully completed on-line and on budget.

Manasota Key north beach erosion – this is one of Matt's projects. I am not up to date on this. You can read what is in the report.

Northwest Port Charlotte – I expect some quotes for navigational trimming to come in today. That advisory board has approved \$50,000 worth of funds for navigational trimming. We currently have a design for 3.5 foot interior dredge project.

Peace River Shores – no project.

Pirate Harbor – no project but it was included in the pre-storm and waiting for the bathymetry.

Southbridge waterway – no active projects.

South Gulf Cove – we do have an RLI went out for this – Johnson Engineering was selected for the turn basin to be dredged. The survey work has been done. I am waiting for deliverables. I expect that around the 1st of the year.

Parallel Locks – this is in design and permitting.

Suncoast waterway – the project was included in the pre-storm.

Stump Pass – you can read over that. This is another Matt Logan project.

That's it for me.

Commissioner Deutsch said for your information, because this group did approve this a few years ago, Administration and staff are meeting right now discussing how to move ahead and the possibility of re-opening the Manchester Waterway. I know we had this discussion a long time ago. The environmentalists are in favor of it. I have a question if anyone knows the answer: When the locks were put in and then taken out, when they were put in, there were 2 or 3 ways to get in and out of the Manchester waterway. Further down, towards where Flamingo comes in. When the locks were put in, they were filled in. When the locks were taken out, that area was supposed to be restored to the way it was supposed to be. Then we put in the environmental thing right near where the locks were. Does anyone have any clue or idea, why they were not opened when the locks were open? From the environmental view, the flushing is important and the Manchester waterway is better quality than the Myakka River.

Mr. Patchell said he will look into it.

Commissioner Deutsch asked if they had any idea where are the remotes for South Gulf Cove?

Mr. Patchell said he does not know, but he does know Public Works is working on that.

Commissioner Deutsch said he has had 2 calls from folks in NW Port Charlotte. This is the area from El Jobean hearing northeast. They want to know why they are the only place in Charlotte County that does not have a boat launch. I told them there is a boat launch a mile or 2 away if they want to go down SR 776 there is one in El Jobean and there is one I used which is by the Coast Guard in North Port. One person said he uses those but thought maybe we should get one in Port Charlotte.

Mike Savino asked if this has anything to do with the cut through?

Mr. Patchell said Buckley's pass. He said no, what the commissioner is referring to is the Charlotte Park area.

Paul Bigness said Stump Pass, going south, has been eroding away pretty heavily.

E. Derelict Vessel Report – Roger DeBruler

Roger DeBruler said since he put out his report, there has been an addition of 5 more boats added. One was a paddle boat which was removed yesterday. They are smaller and human powered. They do not need to be registered. The officers consider them to be abandoned if found in the waterway.

Mr. Hickey asked about the trawler boat laying on its side on Alligator Creek by Riviera marina? He said a trawler has been in the City limits then out of the City limits. It was floating, then just before the last storm, it moved up the river. When the surge came, its way out of the channel. It will be on the right hand side of the Riviera marina now laying on its side. It is a 35' flybridge trawler laying on its side.

Mr. DeBruler said that area is the County's.

Mr. Bigness said Chadwick Cove, there is a sailboat in the back yard and a second sailboat still there. I went out last week and those 2 boats are still there.

Mr. DeBruler said the Sheriff's department is working on their policy that is why they have not given me the authorization to remove the Pilgram, the boat that sank during New Years day. I am going to have it removed over the next 2 weeks. The contractor has to set up for heavy boats.

Mr. Bigness said Fish and Wildlife has been out there visiting one of the boats. I don't know what they were doing. I don't know why we aren't ticketing those guys every day that they do not have a light on their boat. They should be fined and when they go to re-register that boat, they would have to pay the tickets.

Commissioner Deutsch asked are we in a better position for removing the boats now that WCIND is involved?

Mr. DeBruler said WCIND has come on board and helped the County out. We have been working more together now than before, and yes, it does help.

Commissioner Deutsch said Mr. Bigness made a good point. Many of these boats do not have lights on them. The environmental issues are big – there is dumping, they are in the seagrass and there is a safety issue. If you have a vessel and you are going through there at night, and there is a derelict boat in that area, that is a major issue. There should be some way to get those boats moved really quick. The State is not going to help right now. They have financial issues – we have to get through the virus first.

Mr. Bigness said this is on a chart called a safe harbor. Is it possible to get this off that chart or change the designation of being a safe harbor and resume that so we can try to fix what is going on over there?

Commission Deutsch said years back we talked about maybe a harbor of refuge but we need to be careful because people will start to live on their boats. He said Charlotte County needs a marine division.

Mr. DeBruler said FWC has been in that area several times. They are identifying those boats that are issued as a hurricane problem. The hurricane pushed them off their mooring, drug their anchors, pushed them up into the mangroves and into the seagrasses. Those cases are held differently than the standard ones, like the Silverton marine, which is the white over brown boat up against the mangroves. The officers are working that case right now. He has the owners. I am hoping he can get them to come and pull the boat out of the mangroves. If that is not the case, we still have to wait the 21 days. If it is a navigational hazard or an environmental hazard, we can move it yesterday. An officer has to deem those environmentally sensitive. If it is leaking oil/gas, we can get it moved today.

Mr. DeBruler said there was a question what type of officer has to be a witness. It can be the sheriff's department or it can be FWC.

F. Community Services Update – Tina Powell

Tina Powell said she will give a brief overview of projects in our parks.

Ainger Creek – This is being partly managed by Facilities and Construction Maintenance.

Allapatchee – We are working on the fishing pier replacement design. We are getting ready to go to Purchasing for that.

Hathaway Park – canoe/kayak launch repairs are underway. They anticipate being done in about 3 to 4 weeks.

Live Oak Point – we are adding some new handrails along the sidewalk where people were walking through that created an erosion issue.

Placida Park – 2014 sales tax expansion is being managed by Facilities. They are working with Public Works to determine entry points and circulation, then they will continue on the master planning and site planning of that park.

Port Charlotte Beach Park – the 2014 sailing center has provided the following update – the workshop foundation and walls are up. Waterline and hose bib have been installed and is working. They are working on electrical and the roof trusses have been delivered. There is an upcoming repair to the recreation center facility that will require some utility repair that may impact the park. Once we have more information on that, we will let you know.

Riverside Park – the ramp is in the design phase for those repairs.

Williams R. Gaines Veterans Memorial Park – the County received a grant. We will be adding some additional trails, fitness equipment and signs separate from the approved 2022 phase 2 project.

Capt. Blago said Ainger Creek program – I looked on the website under projects. 1.3 million dollar renovation to be completed in 2022. Why did they pave the parking lot before Thanksgiving when a major renovation will be happening soon?

Ms. Powell said the condition site assessment that Facilities did for the parking lot, indicated that it was time to be repaved. We know even if the project gets approved for the grant funding fiscal year 2022, it will be at least another year (plus) before construction actually starts with permitting and things like that, so the safety hazard from 2020 to 2022 or 2023 as identified by the assessment, it needed to be done now.

Capt. Blago asked how are you going to pay for the renovations and if it is going to come out of this committee, shouldn't you bring us plans?

Ms. Powell said we already presented plans in 2019. You all had a chance to see them. Michael Poff also looked at them. We are funding it through capital improvement, the boat ramp, which is where some of our parking meter funds go to and we will also be looking for a State grant. Depending on what we are allotted, there is a possibility we would ask this group out of the WCIND or the State BIF funds, to make up some of that difference.

Capt. Blago asked how many new parking spots will we have after the renovation?

Ms. Powell said she will check the plans but believes off the top of her head, it will be an additional 7 to 12 parking spaces, trailer spaces, but she wants to verify that.

Mr. Bigness asked if this project would be competitively bid and if yes, how do they determine that?

Ms. Powell said yes. Through the opinion of probably clause that was designed through our consultant Coastal Engineering.

Mr. Bigness said some of the County project are not competitively out for bid. He referenced one project that the bid was twice the amount it should have been. I am a licensed general contractor and I am offering my services at no extra cost.

Ms. Powell said our Facilities Construction Management department is going to oversee that project. I believe with most of the sales tax projects, they bid it out through a construction manager.

7. New Business

A. Re-appointment applications for Recommendation

Chair Ireland said have a re-appointment application for 7 of us who's terms were up. The Commissioners already approved our re-appointment this past Tuesday at their meeting.

B. Election of Officers

Chair Ireland said there are 3 of us.

Gerald Meckenberg said Tom Ireland is the current Chair, Susan Bareither is the current Vice-Chair and Gerald Meckenberg is Secretary. I will ask for nominations for any of those 3 offices.

Nominations for Chair – Mr. Killion nominated Tom Ireland – all in favor – all agreed – Mr. Ireland is Chair

Nominations for Vice-Chair – Mr. Strube nominated Sue Bareither – all in favor – all agreed – Ms. Bareither is Vice-Chair

Nominations for Secretary – Mr. Killion nominated Gerry Meckenberg in perpetuity - all in favor – all agreed – Gerry Meckenberg is Secretary

Capt. Blago said we are very fortunate to have excellent leadership. These 3 have been in these positions a long time and are very good at it. We should be looking for future leadership as we are all getting older.

C. CHEC – virtual education program/environmental project

Michael Bednar – CHEC CEO said they were awarded the MAC grant for environmental education last year to be executed during the next several quarters here. At the time when the grant was awarded, the proposal we submitted was pre-pandemic. Now that the time has come to execute the grant, we need to move funds from one column to another. We are not asking for more money, but as it is stated in the grant agreement, any time you move funds from one column to another, it needs to be brought forth. That is what I am doing. When it was awarded, the entirety of the \$40,000 grant was under the contractual services column. We had an even split between chartered boat captains and independent contractors. As it stands, the schools will not allow us to pack 70 kids onto a boat. We had to readjust. We reformulated the entire field trip. It is like a virtual hybrid equivalent. We will do a lot more science type of experiments, which we package materials into hands on labs, we will film videos and will provide virtual support. It is the way of the world right now. I reached out to our piers and other environmental centers to see what they are doing and we are a little ahead of the curve. I am very happy to say the money is being well spent to honor the theme spirit of the grant but I did want to let you know the money is being moved. It looks like \$14,000 will be contractual services and then quite a bit of it is in materials. We have to buy labs for 1,200 kids, this adds up quick. There was a \$20 kit on Amazon but we were able to source it wholesale for about

\$3.50. But again, when you are buying 1,200 of them, it adds up. He has a breakdown for the change if anyone wants to read it. We have all the records and they will be kept and given to Jim.

Mr. Savino asked are you buying these items locally?

Mr. Bednar said not all the products are here locally. We buy locally as much as we can. Sometimes the price is 2 or 3 times more than another price on-line.

Capt. Blago said the history of this grant goes way back. Originally the school board paid the cost of this program. The last budget crisis we had 10 years ago, the school board decided not to fund this project. At the time, MAC stepped in and said we will give you some money to keep it going until you find other sources. Since then, the money we have given has increased over time. We are paying to take kids on the water. We understand with Covid and these circumstances, but there is another budget cycle coming up and they can make changes.

Mr. Bednar said the kids would prefer to be out on the boat, but under these circumstances, they know they can't. We think there might be one more year where the schools have restrictions.

Mr. Bigness asked if maybe people volunteer to put a few kids on their boats and if there's enough volunteers, they can get all the kids out on the water.

Mr. Strube said there would be an issue with kids on the boats. Probably background checks and liability. He asked if there was any issue with how the grant is being spent referring to the changes because of Covid.

Mr. Darden said he has no problem with reallocations of the funds to compensate the pandemic approach referring to the environmental education. This is a boating type of committee and the environmental education is part of the WCIND criteria for allocating grant funds, and it is under that premise they have this grant. He said he will get with Justin to make sure he is okay with this change of scope as well.

Ms. Bareither said she didn't know how much time we should spend on this since we are not looking at grants now. He is a step ahead but I think we will find a lot of changes to a lot of the grants this year.

8. Old Business – Sailing Center Update

Mr. Killion said Ms. Powell pretty much covered this but he spoke with the supervisor to make sure everything is included and it all looks good.

9. Other Business

John Welsh said the Coast Guard has proposed a study to determine if they want to take out markers in 12 feet of water or less. I have written a letter to the Coast Guard and Boaters Alliance questioning the wisdom of this study. I suggest everyone in this room write a letter or if you are in a club, send a letter to the Coast Guard regarding the proposed study to remove markers in 12 feet of water.

Mr. Ireland asked if he had the address and if not, can he bring the address next month.

Ms. Bareither asked if this was posted somewhere where we can review this?

Mr. Welsh said yes because it was sent to him. There was a period for comments but that time has expired. There is a link where you can write to the Coast Guard.

10. Citizen Comments
None offered.

11. Good of the Order

Commissioner Deutsch said this is a good committee. Regarding the markers, he has boated many years from Florida up to Maine, and Florida is poorly marked so this is a concern. A Coast Guard fundraising group is working with Parks and Recreation and they plan to raise money to help improve the kayak/Veterans Memorial Park. They have already sent in a check for several hundreds of dollars. On New Years Eve day morning, they will have a 5K run and parade from down here and then back to the Gaines Park. It is a fundraising effort for the kayak part. This is under a 501C3 if anyone would like to make a contribution.

12. Next Meetings

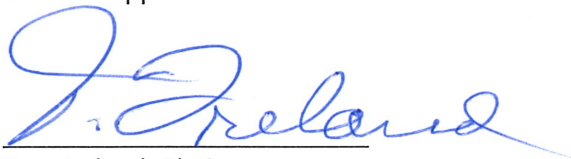
- The next **Pre-Agenda Meeting** will be held Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. in the **E. Jay Carlson Large Conference Room**.
- The next **Regular Meeting** will be held Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. in **Port Charlotte Beach Complex**.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Strube made a motion to adjourn, second by **Mr. Hickey**, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Minutes Approved



Tom Ireland, Chair